

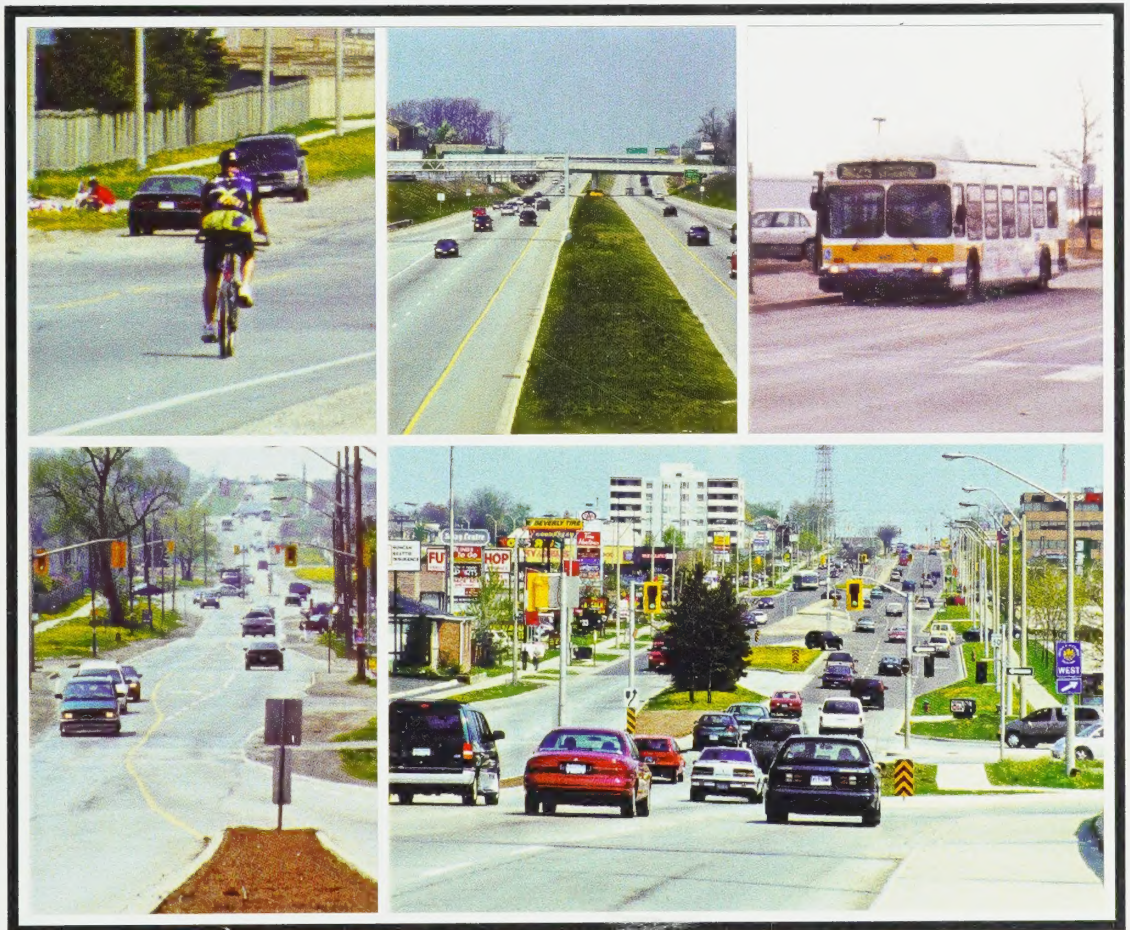
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South Mountain Area Transportation Master Plan Study


Class Environmental Study Report



Executive Summary

City of Hamilton/Region of Hamilton-Wentworth
Predesign & Special Projects Office,
Roads Department

May, 2000



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Public Review of the Environmental Study Report

This ESR has been filed for a thirty (30) day public review period at the following locations:

- Clerk's Office
City of Hamilton / Region of Hamilton-
Wentworth, 2nd Floor, City Hall
- Ministry of the Environment
West Central Region
119 King Street West, 12th Floor
- Central Library
55 York Boulevard
- Concession Library
555 Concession Street
- Terryberry Library
100 Mohawk Road West
- Sherwood Library
462 Upper Ottawa Street

The public has been notified of the review period by an advertisement in the Hamilton Spectator and in the Hamilton Mountain News.

The thirty (30) day review period is from May 17 to June 15, 2000. If, after reading the ESR, you have questions or concerns please follow this procedure:

1. Contact the following to discuss your questions or concerns.

Gavin Norman, Project Manager, (905) 546-2433, or
Chris Murray, Manager of Environmental Planning, (905) 546-2486
Predesign and Special Projects Office
77 James Street North, Suite 320
Hamilton, ON L8R 2K3

2. Arrange a meeting with the above staff if you have significant concerns that may require more detailed explanation.
3. If you raise major concerns, the City / Region will attempt to negotiate a resolution of the issues. A mutually acceptable time period for this negotiation will be set. If, at the end of this period, the issues remain unresolved, you may request the Minister of the Environment, by order, to require the City/Region to comply with Part II of the Environmental Assessment Act before proceeding with the project. This is called a Part II Order. The Minister will make one of the following decisions:
 - deny the request
 - refer the matter to mediation
 - require the City/Region to comply with Part II of the Environmental Assessment Act by undertaking one of the following:
 - submitting the ESR for government review and approval, or
 - completing an individual Environmental Assessment for government review and approval, or
 - preparing Terms of Reference governing the preparation of an individual Environmental Assessment.

SOUTH MOUNTAIN TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

E.1 Study Purpose

The South Mountain Transportation Master Plan is intended to guide the construction of transportation infrastructure over the next twenty years. The study was initiated for several reasons:

- To understand the impact and identify improvements that need to be made to the major road network in the South Mountain Area (the study area is shown in Exhibit E.1) as a result of both:
 - changed traffic patterns that followed the opening of the Lincoln M. Alexander Parkway (Linc) in October 1997; and
 - expected growth in the South Mountain Area and adjacent communities in Stoney Creek and Ancaster
- To develop a comprehensive transportation plan that sets project scope and priority in order to co-ordinate their scheduling and budgeting.
- To investigate opportunities to promote the transportation objectives of Vision 2020 that aim at less reliance on the automobile and more support of sustainable forms of transportation such as transit, cycling and walking.

E.2 Planning Process

The Transportation Master Plan study documented in Volumes 1 and 2 of this Environmental Study Report (ESR) followed a provincially approved planning process outlined in the "Class Environmental Assessment for Municipal Road Projects, 1993" (Class EA). As a Master Plan study, it must at a minimum, satisfy Phases 1 (Problem/Opportunities) and 2 (Alternative Solutions) of the Class EA process before any identified project proceeds to construction (Phase 5).

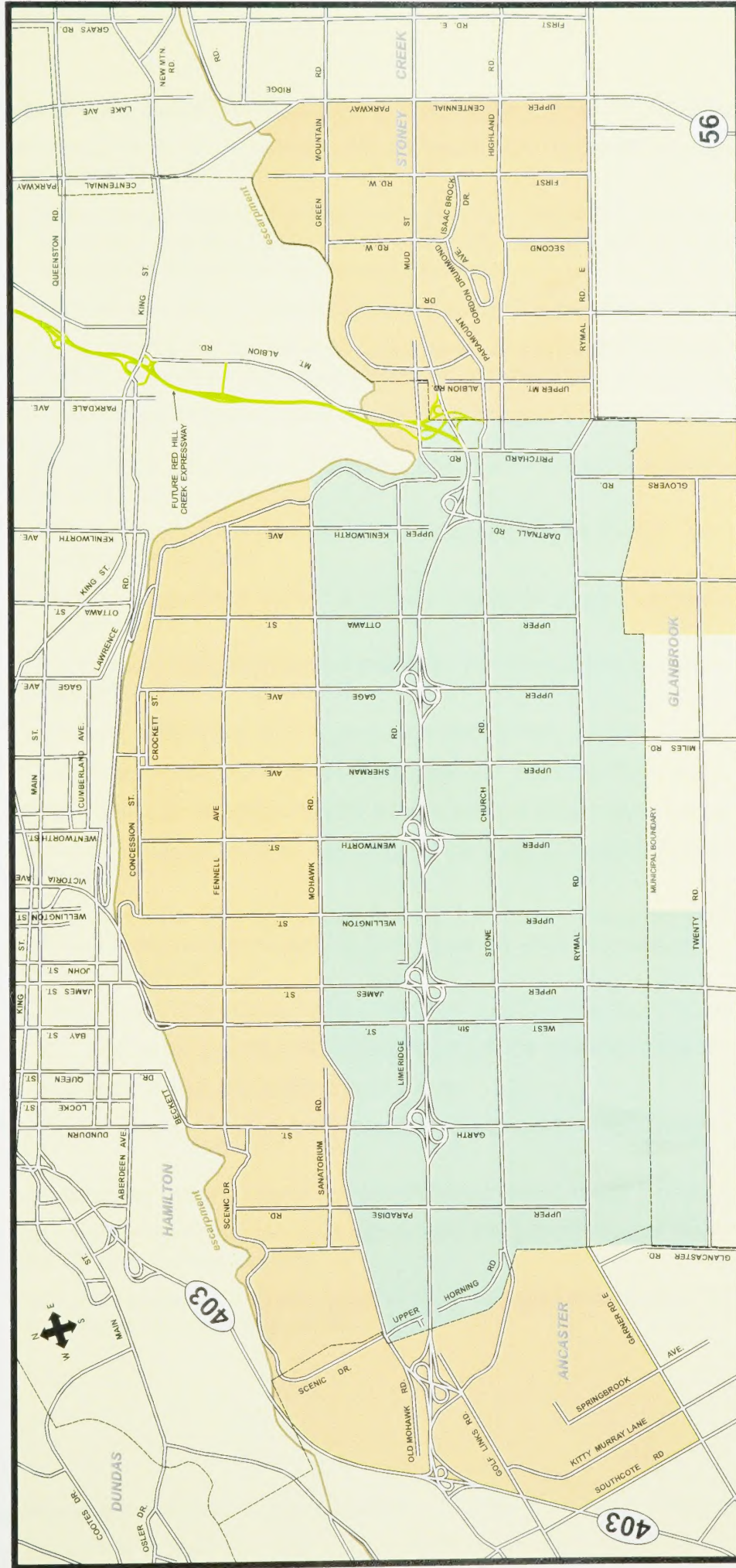
The ESR was developed in accordance with the five key principles of good Environmental Assessment planning. They include:

Principle #1 Consultation with affected parties early on such that the planning process is co-operative.

Two sets of public meetings were held at key stages in the planning process:

- November 3 and 4, 1999 - "Identification of Problems and Opportunities"
- February 16 and 17, 2000 - "Identification of Alternatives and the Preferred Solution"

In addition, a staffed display at Limeridge Mall followed both sets of public meetings. (Refer to Volume 1, Section 2.2.4, 5.9, 7.5.3, and Volume 2, Appendix 'B' of the Report.)



SOUTH MOUNTAIN AREA TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN STUDY

Exhibit E.1



- Primary Study Area
- Secondary Study Area

STUDY AREA

In summary, the November and February consultation events yielded the following information:

- November 1999: 15 people attended the events and 13 people answered questionnaires summarized below.
 - 60% of respondents found traffic congestion in the South Mountain Area (SMA) a very significant problem; Upper James Street, Rymal Road, Stone Church Road and Upper Wentworth Street were specifically mentioned.
 - 50% of respondents indicated motorist safety is a problem in the SMA
 - 40% of respondents indicated cyclist safety is a problem in the SMA, specifically concerning lack of bike routes, poor road conditions, and disregard for road rules
 - 25% of respondents indicated pedestrian safety is a problem in the SMA
- February 2000: 43 people attended the events and 16 people answered questionnaires as summarized below.
 - 70% of respondents agreed that the proposed improvements address the transportation problems in the SMA
 - 50% of respondents agreed that the construction schedule for the proposed improvements was satisfactory
 - 40% of respondents indicated that there were transportation issues not addressed in the study, including:
 - unacceptable levels of dust generated from gravel shoulders (partially addressed by this Plan)
 - neighbourhood traffic infiltration (partially addressed by this Plan)
 - poor sidewalk condition (will be addressed on a project by project basis)

These issues are beyond the scope of the study but will be dealt with on a project by project basis.
- November 11-13, 1999 and March 3, 2000: Information Packages were distributed at an information booth set up at the Limeridge Mall to increase the level of awareness of the study. Feedback from the public included:
 - concern with the proposed Red Hill Creek Expressway (both for and against)
 - the closing of Limeridge Road resulting from the opening of the Linc (approved by Council)
 - concerns in reduced public transit service

Public input resulted in the following recommendations and considerations for future projects in the SMA:

- A landscaping plan for Upper Wentworth Street (see Chapter 7 of the Report).
- The need for improvements as a high priority on Upper Paradise Road south of Stone Church Road (see Chapter 5 of the Report).
- The consideration of curb and gutter in place of gravel shoulders on all projects to improve aesthetics and reduce dust levels.

External agency involvement was also an integral part of the Plan development. Several meetings were held with the Ministry of the Environment, West Central Region to review study findings and obtain guidance on the study process. There was also correspondence with other provincial agencies including the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation regarding archaeological resources and requirements for surveys. Municipal stakeholders such as the Regional Fire Department were contacted regarding emergency services access, the Planning Department regarding land use development and policy, and the HSR regarding operations and provision of services.

The consultation programme concluded with a 30-day public review of the ESR as mandated by the Class EA process.

Principle #2 Identification and review of a reasonable range of alternatives.

Following the identification of problems and opportunities related to road capacity, condition, and safety (Chapter 4 of the Report), a set of Alternative Solutions were generated and screened for feasibility. These included: do nothing, expanding transit service, limiting growth, diverting traffic, expanding and upgrading existing roads and building new roads.

The results are as follows:

Expanding Transit Service was **not** recommended because the existing pattern of development and demographic trends do not support greater transit service in the SMA.

Limiting or Managing Growth was **not** recommended because the study area is for the most part developed and changes to the remaining developable land would have little effect on overall traffic demand.

Diverting Traffic to Other Roads was **not** recommended because:

- Travel demand forecasts indicate none of the major corridors will be underutilized.
- The potential to divert traffic would be minimal because of the increase in out-of-the-way travel and related travel time.
- It would likely cause increased neighbourhood traffic infiltration.

Building New Roads was **not** recommended because:

- The majority of neighbourhoods are fully developed, thereby physically limiting opportunities to develop new rights-of-ways without causing major neighbourhood disruptions.
- Travel demand forecasts show that the existing road network is adequate with the need for relatively minor improvements.

Alternative Solutions considered worthy of evaluation included: **Do Nothing** and **Expand and Upgrade Existing Roads**.

The **Expand and Upgrade Existing Roads** solution is worthy of evaluation for the following reasons:

- It is able to address short and long-term transportation requirements relating to road capacity, condition, and safety.
- It is appropriate for all users (pedestrians, cyclists, transit and auto).

- It will allow road expansion for all users within existing rights-of-way.
- It is safer and provides more efficient movement of people and goods.
- It will result in lower maintenance costs and longer service life for roads.
- It will provide a satisfactory level of service.

The **Do Nothing** solution was **not** preferred for the following reasons:

- It will lead to unacceptable congestion on the major road network in the peak hours.
- It will lead to increased driver frustration putting the safety of all users at risk.
- It would be a barrier to economic growth and would not support current land use objectives as per the Official Plan.

Expand and Upgrade Existing Roads was identified as the preferred solution for addressing the problems and opportunities. However, the Do Nothing solution helps put into perspective the advantages and disadvantages associated with change.

Based on the Expand and Upgrade Existing Roads solution, a set “network” of alternatives were identified based on a combination of road widening, resurfacing, and reconstruction projects to determine which network would best address the identified problems and make use of any available opportunities (see Chapter 5 of this Report).

The Region developed and applied a set of ‘guiding principles’ to help generate a reasonable range of network alternatives. These principles enabled the City / Region to identify fourteen road sections where expanding and upgrading existing roads would have minimal environmental impact and still resolve the stated transportation problems. The application of these principles yielded three network alternatives differentiated by the following road widening options (in other words all other proposed road expansions and upgrades were common to each network alternative):

- Option A - Widen Upper Wellington Street from two to four/five lanes (Stone Church Road to the Linc)
- Option B - Widen West 5th Street from two to four/five lanes (Stone Church Road to the Linc)
- Option C - Widen Upper Sherman Street from two to four/five lanes (Stone Church Road to the Linc)

Principle #3 Identification and consideration of the effects of each alternative on all aspects of the environment.

A set of evaluation criteria was developed to help predict transportation natural, socio-economic, and cultural effects of each alternative. They are summarized as follows:

- Natural Environment (Trees Removed)
- Cultural Environment (Direct and/or Indirect Effect on Heritage Resources)
- Economic Environment (Impact On Existing and Future Commercial Uses)
- Social Environment
 - Number Of Properties and type of Land Use Potentially Affected
 - Air Quality and Noise
 - Community / Neighbourhood Disruption

- Transportation
 - Network Level Of Service And Network Flexibility
 - Effect On Travel Patterns
 - Access
 - Safety
 - Transit

Principle #4 Systematic evaluation of advantages and disadvantages of identified alternatives to determine their net environmental effects.

The application of the aforementioned guiding principles and evaluation criteria led to the identification of a preferred network solution consisting of a set of road improvements based on the Expand and Upgrade Existing Roads alternative and included Option A - Widen Upper Wellington Street to four/five lanes as described above.

Option A - widening Upper Wellington Street to four/five lanes between Stone Church Road and the Linc was preferred over the other two options because:

- It would have the least impact on existing neighbourhoods and residential uses adjacent to the roadway. In addition to the fewest houses along the road, the area is in transition with respect to land use, whereas both other roads have established roadside development.
- In terms of travel demand, Upper Wellington Street is centred well in the corridor of demand and provides the greatest opportunity for route selection and possible diversion from more congested routes.
- It is potentially the safest option in terms of the limited number of access points and it is not on a bike network route.

Regional Council formally endorsed the preferred network on April 4, 2000 as the Recommended Transportation Plan for the South Mountain Area.

The advantages and disadvantages associated with the plan can be summarized as follows:

The Recommended Transportation Plan will facilitate the development of land use for the South Mountain Area as per the Regional Official Plan, and will enable the existing transportation network to continue providing a satisfactory Level of Service for all users, including transit, cyclists and pedestrians.

However, in facilitating land use as per the Official Plan, it recognizes the dependency of the automobile as the primary transportation mode in an area that can be described as “urban sprawl”. Although the Plan provides for expansion of other modes (particularly transit and cycling) it doesn’t significantly effect change toward less reliance on the automobile.

The Recommended Transportation Plan is illustrated in Exhibit E.2, E.3 and further described below.

Principle #5 Provision of clear and complete documentation of the planning process.

When read in its entirety, the ESR makes traceable and replicable the decision-making process that led to the Master Plan approved by Council.

E.3 Description of the Preferred Plan (Refer to Exhibit E.2 and E.3)

The preferred Transportation Master Plan for the South Mountain Area (SMA) consists of projects ranging from road resurfacing to roadway widening and reconstruction. All identified road improvements will include consideration of improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities as part of the road design.

The order in which these projects will be constructed took into consideration safety issues, capacity needs and/or poor road conditions, cost of the project and funding availability, timing of infrastructure projects and adjacent land use developments, and property requirements.

Subsequently, the Plan calls for projects to be completed in two time frames: the Short-Term (2000-2005) and Long-Term (2006-2021). The long-term projects are flexible in the timing of their implementation with indicated timeframes dictating only the year by which the project should be complete. The Implementation Plan is described in Exhibit E.4.

The actual schedule of long-term projects will be determined closer to their indicated 'construction by' date. The timing of all projects is subject to the Roads Capital Budget which is set yearly and requires Council approval.

Should unforeseen changes occur, it might be necessary to advance or delay certain projects. The necessity to change the timing (as indicated) has no influence on the ultimate network configuration, but timing changes on one project could influence the timing on subsequent projects.

E.3.1 Reconstruction and Widening of Upper Wentworth Street

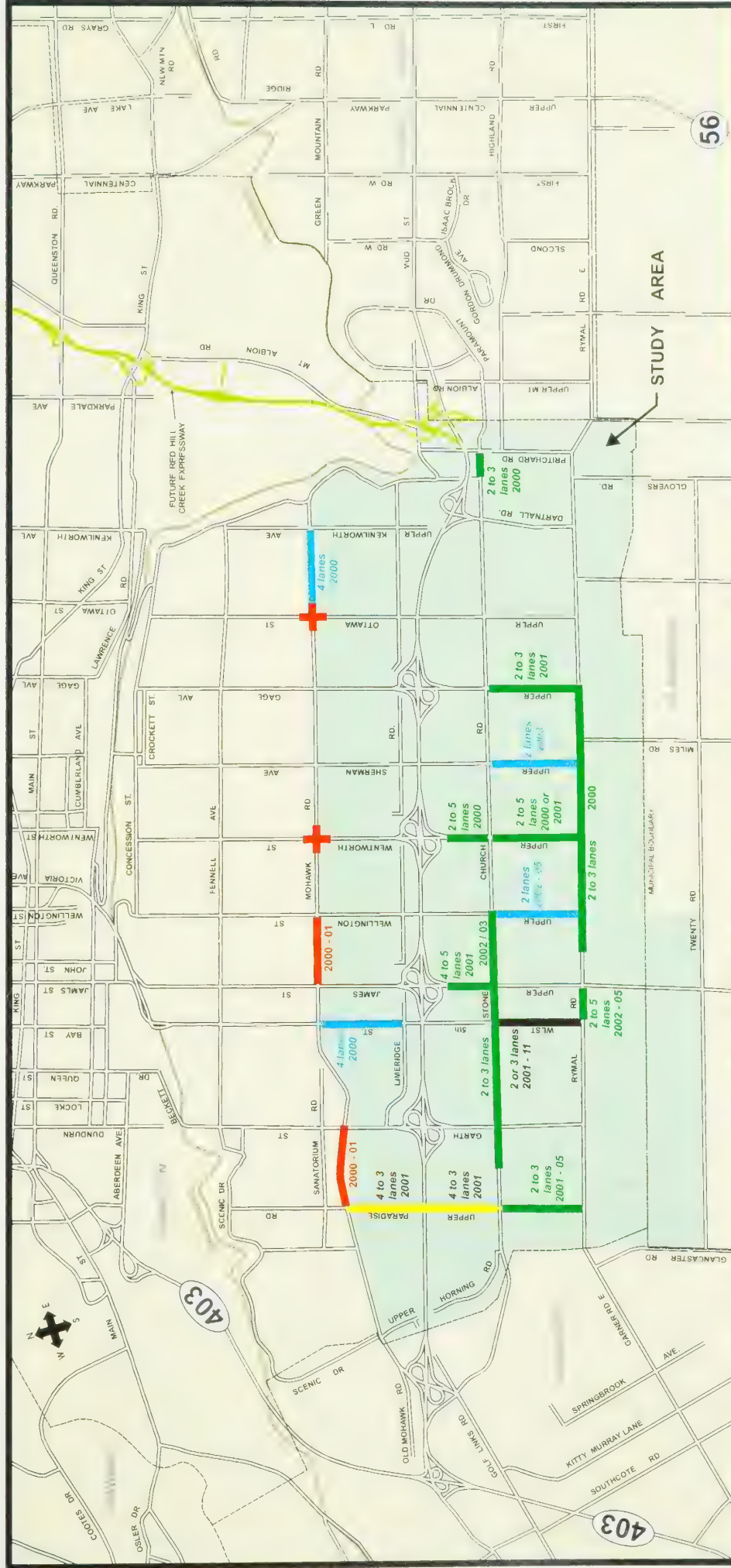
The Master Plan identified the short-term need to reconstruct and widen Upper Wentworth Street from two to four or five lanes (four lanes plus a centre-turn lane) from Rymal Road to the Linc. This is to be completed in two stages: Linc to Stone Church Road in 2000 and Stone Church Road to Rymal Road in 2001.

The project was identified as Schedule 'C' Class EA; hence, it needed to fulfill the additional requirements of Phases 3, 4, and 5 of the Class EA including additional consultation. As per Phase 3 of the Class EA, design alternatives were developed, evaluated and compared for their transportation benefits, and effects on the natural, socio-economic, and cultural environments. The evaluation criteria used for the evaluation represent issues of importance to the safe and efficient operation of the roadway. The result of this process was the identification of the recommended design for Upper Wentworth Street.

A public open house held on March 1, 2000 at which 43 people attended, yielded the following information:

- Almost everybody agreed with the proposal to widen Upper Wentworth Street.
- There were issues that existed with the proposal that would need to be resolved including landscaping, pedestrian safety, and access. Other comments related to traffic noise, air quality, bus stops and bus shelters.

The evaluation of the design options concluded that a **five-lane (two lanes in each direction with a centre-turn lane) Upper Wentworth Street with a Raised Median** is the Preferred Option. This was preferred overall because:

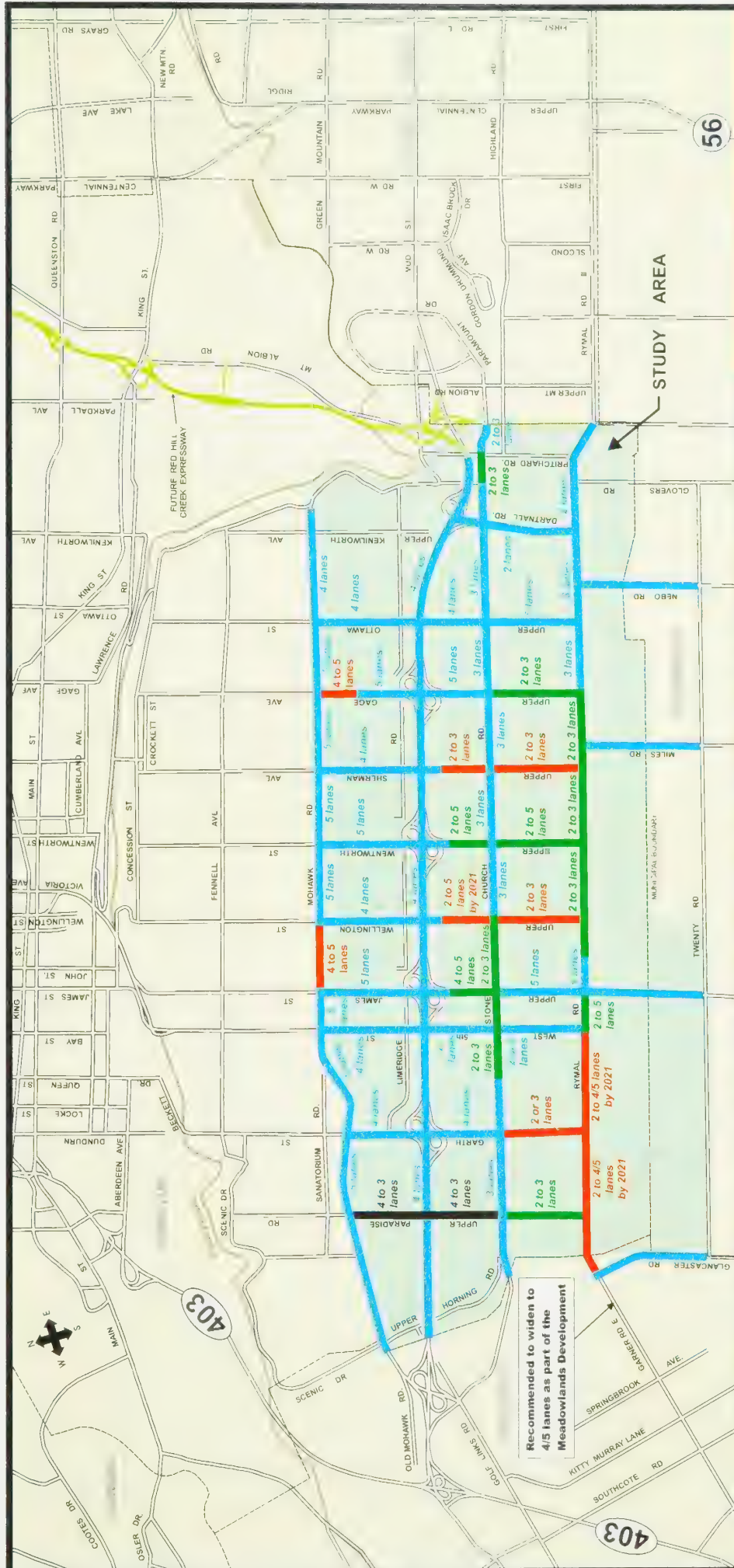


SOUTH MOUNTAIN AREA TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN STUDY

Exhibit E.2

- Widening and/or Reconstruction Projects
- Resurface
- Pavement Reallocation (Re-striping) Project
- Need for Improvement Dependent on Timing of Development of Connell Park
- Address Existing Safety Problems - to be Assessed Further

RECOMMENDED PLAN (Short-term Improvements) 2000 - 2005



SOUTH MOUNTAIN AREA TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN STUDY

Exhibit E-3

RECOMMENDED PLAN (Ultimate Configuration) 2021

- Short-Term Widening / Reconstruction Projects (2000 - 05)
- Long-Term Widening / Reconstruction Projects (2005 - 21)
- Long-Term Resurfacing/Reconstruction Projects, No Widening (2005 - 21)
- Pavement Reallocation (Restriping) Project

Road	Section	# Lanes		Year/Comment
		Existing	Future	
Short- Term (2000 –2005)				
Upper Paradise	Mohawk to Stone Church	4	3	2001 (re-stripe - to coincide with completion of Stone Church to Rymal)
	Stone Church to Rymal (north)	2	3	2001 (reconstruct; investigate further)
	Stone Church to Rymal (south)	2	3	2001-05 (reconstruct; to follow development)
West 5th	Stone Church to Rymal	2	2 or 3	To be re-assessed at the time of development of Connell Park in 2000/01)
	Mohawk to Linc	4	4	2000 (resurface)
Upper James	Linc to Stone Church	4	5	2001 (widen and resurface)
Upper Wellington	Stone Church to Rymal	2	2	2002-05 (resurface)
Upper Wentworth	Linc to Stone Church	2	5	2000 (reconstruct)
	Stone Church to Rymal	2	4/5	2000 or 2001 (reconstruct)
Upper Sherman	Stone Church to Rymal	2	2	2003 (resurface; coincides with sewer installations)
Upper Gage	Stone Church to Rymal	2	3	2001 (reconstruct; coincides with trunk watermain installation)
Mohawk Road	Upper Ottawa to Upper Kenilworth			
	Various collision locations	-	-	2000 or 2001
Stone Church	Garth to Upper Wellington	2	3	2002/03 (reconstruct)
	Arbour to Pritchard	2	3	2000 (reconstruct)
Rymal	West 5th to Upper James	3	5	2004/05 (widen and resurface)
	Springside to Upper Wentworth	2	3	2000 (widen and resurface)
	Upper Wentworth to Upper Gage	2	3	2000 (widen and resurface)
	Dartnall to Trinity Church	2	2	2001-05 (resurface)
Long - Term (Beyond 2005)				
Garth	Stone Church to Rymal	2	2 or 3	reconstruct by 2011
West 5th	Linc to Stone Church	2	2	resurface (with improved shoulders) or reconstruct as required by 2011
Upper Wellington	Linc to Stone Church	2	5	reconstruct by 2021; resurface as required in the interim
	Stone Church to Rymal	2	3	reconstruct by 2021
Upper Sherman	Linc to Stone Church	2	3	reconstruct with bike lanes by 2011
	Stone Church to Rymal	2	3	reconstruct by 2021; no bike lanes
Upper Gage	Mohawk to Thorley / Edwina	4	5	widen and resurface by 2011
Rymal	Glancaster to West 5th	2	4/5	reconstruction by 2021
Mohawk	Upper James to Upper Wellington	4	5	widen and resurface by 2011

Notes:

- (1) All other roads may need resurfacing or reconstruction, either to the existing 2 lanes or with a centre turn lane added.
(2) All improvements will include the consideration of improved bike and pedestrian facilities.

- It offers additional vehicle capacity and collision reduction potential at a minor increase in cost.
- It provides better vehicle access to residential areas.
- It reduces the potential conflict between opposing left-turning vehicles.
- It improves pedestrian safety by providing refuge in the raised median sections.
- It enhances the aesthetics of the road by incorporating streetscaping into the median design.

E.4 Implementation and Monitoring

The Municipality is prepared to implement the Transportation Master Plan with mitigation, monitoring actual effects and re-evaluation of the proposed plan.

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